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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000100

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TAGS: MCAP MOPS PBTS PGOV PINR PINS PREL PTER IR IZ

SUBJECT: GENERAL MOHAN'S SECURITY PLAN FOR BASRAH

REF: A. BASRAH 67 B. BASRAH 50 C. BASRAH 53 D. BASRAH 88 E. BASRAH 98

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CLASSIFIED BY: Louis L. Bono, Director, Regional Embassy Office
- Basrah, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (a), (b)

¶11. (S) SUMMARY: Basrah's Security Chief, Lieutenant General Mohan Hafith Fahad, has laid out his security plan for Basrah, which relies heavily on the Iraqi Army (IA) rather than the Iraqi Police (IP), which remains compromised by militia infiltration. The ambitious plan calls for the central government's support in replacing the Department of Border Enforcement (DBE) and the Coastal Guards and Internal Waters (CGIW) forces with IA units to secure the province's borders. The plan would also replace the police at checkpoints on the city's perimeter, establish 'strong points' in militia neighborhoods, and upon conclusion of a weapons amnesty program, conduct limited strike operations against militia/criminal cells. For these reasons, Mohan is requesting additional IA troops. The plan is to be presented at the Ministerial Council on National Security meeting scheduled for Sunday, October 28. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (S) Basrah's Security Chief, LTG Mohan has had a concept for several months (ref A), but his ability to implement a plan has been stifled by pervasive levels of corruption, militia influence and overall ineffectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in Basrah. In order to buy time to build a capable force, Mohan negotiated an accommodation with Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) (refs A-C). Now, after four months in command, Mohan has finally articulated the specific actions he intends to take. The six-page document is summarized below and will be forwarded to Embassy Baghdad. We are told that Mohan will personally present his plan before the central government at the next Ministerial Council on National Security meeting on October 28.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

¶13. (S) Mohan attributes Basrah's security problems to multiple factors (internal political parties/militias and external neighboring countries) that individually are at cross-purposes, but collectively are destabilizing the province (ref D). Other areas that he says need to be resolved are: the dispute between Governor Mohammed Wa'eli and the Provincial Council, unemployment, and interference by neighboring countries.

BORDER CONTROL

¶4. (S) Mohan recognizes that military efforts within Basrah will not be successful as long as the currently porous borders continue to allow material support to reach the militias. He admits that the DBE officers are corrupt and beholden to the political parties, and its subsidiary CGIW force is also corrupt and either involved in smuggling or in covering up smuggling activities. He recommends relieving the DBE's 4th Sector commander, Brigadier Abbas Muhsin Ali, and the CGIW's commander, Brigadier Hakeem Jassim Jassaam for being inept and tied to the political parties. (Note: Jassim was once a serious candidate for the Basrah Police Chief and was supported by Badr and other Basrah Islamia groups. End note.) Mohan seeks to relieve the 4th DBE from its duties and hand over border security to the IA. If he faces political opposition to this move, he will replace the DBE with other DBE units from outside Basrah. Mohan also seeks to relieve the CGIW of its duties patrolling the Shatt al-Arab Waterway (SAAW) in favor of the Naval Force.

SECURING ENTRY INTO BASRAH

¶5. (S) In addition to securing the borders from smuggling, Mohan also intends to secure the entry/exit points to Basrah city (ref E). To that end, he will replace the police at vehicle checkpoints on the city's outskirts with two IA infantry battalions. Another IA infantry battalion will be deployed to the tribal areas between Basrah and Maysan (Dair, Hartha, Nahr al-Izz, Qurna, etc.) to deny militias safe-havens for conducting criminal activities and prevent what he believes to be the main routes for arms smuggling into Basrah. An additional infantry battalion will deploy to observe and control the area east of the SAAW to the Iranian border, which due to the lack of an IA presence, dense date groves, and proximity to the Iranian border, permits significant, unobserved militia activity.

SECURING BASRAH

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¶6. (S) Within Basrah, Mohan's plan calls for a media campaign to advertise a weapons amnesty program with cash payments. According to the plan, amnesty would be supported by political parties, religious and tribal leaders, and NGOs. At the end of the amnesty period, Basrah would be declared a "weapons free city." Military 'strong points' would also be established in areas of significant militia activity to control neighborhood entry points, contain militia movements, and provide launch sites for 24-hour patrolling and combat operations. One reinforced company would set up in each of the neighborhoods of Hayanah, Five Mile, Gizaizah, al-Qiblah, Timaniyah, Basrah Qadeemah (old Basrah), and Jumhuria. Two infantry battalions would be required to man the 'strong points.'

¶7. (S) With strong points emplaced and at the end of the amnesty period, "limited disruptive operations (with guaranteed successes) against areas" known for sheltering terrorists, criminals, and weapons would be conducted with the intent of "raising troop moral and to make it clear to militias, parties, and criminals [the ISF's] ability to confront them." Some limited joint operations with Coalition air cover would also be conducted against terrorist/criminal safe houses and smuggling activities in Abu al-Khaseeb and Safwan. Mohan admits that the IA would enforce the majority of his security plan, because the IP are patently corrupt.

GOI SUPPORT REQUIRED

¶8. (S) In order to implement his plan, Mohan requests the central government's support for his initiative to relieve the DBE of its border duties and to reform IP units, particularly its intelligence unit. He also requests that the 1st and 2nd Brigades (presumably of the 14th IA Division now being formed) be supplied with sufficient weapons, vehicles, and equipment within a month. He is urgently requesting two light infantry battalions, one mechanized infantry battalion (with wheeled

armored vehicles), and one tank company to reinforce his command to implement the plan.

ANSWERING HIS CRITICS

¶9. (S) Mohan's document also addresses some of the criticisms laid against him that the ISF have "waited too long" before confronting Basrah's security problems and "turning a blind eye" to militia activities, particularly JAM. Mohan implies that the multiple negative influences (political party support for militias and foreign influences) make the situation complex and difficult to manage, but despite that, crime has decreased and the ISF represent a "real deterrence." JAM, he claims, is abiding by terms he "imposed" not to "embark upon any deed that is not acceptable to us" and its leadership is now divided due to Mohan's orders not to openly carry arms.

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